



## **INDONESIA: ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS FEBRUARY -MARCH 2005**

### **Summary:**

- Landslide disaster at dumpsite in West Java causes 143 deaths. Indonesia continues to fight against tuberculosis.
- Too much construction and water usage are causing Indonesia to sink.
- A respected botanist claims that rare flowers are disappearing from Sumatra's shrinking rain forests.
- HIV/AIDS cases rose in Timika last year.
- The World Bank helps Indonesia handle its waste.

### **Dump Disaster Kills 143**

On Wednesday February 21 at 2:00 a.m., a garbage dump collapsed and triggered a landslide that crashed onto two villages in Leuwigajah, Cimahi, which is nine miles from Bandung, the Provincial capital of West Java). The 197-foot, high, 656-foot wide and 1230-foot long pile of trash flattened 70 houses and killing at least 143 residents and injuring hundreds others. The Leuwigajah dumpsite receives waste from the Bandung and Cimahi municipalities. Many believe and some local officials acknowledge that poor waste management and processing (including the absence of a an exhaust pipe for methane gas) caused the explosion of methane gas and the resultant dump collapse and landslide. The police have begun an investigation of the Head of Bandung Municipality's Sanitation Office Awan Gumelar and have submitted his name to the local prosecutor. The latter has since charged Awan with mismanagement and negligence, including the violation of Article 43 - 46 of Environmental Law No. 23/1997.

### **The GOI Acts Quickly to Control TB**

Tuberculosis (TB) monitoring teams visited 11 provinces throughout Indonesia from March 7-8. The teams consisted of staff from the World Health Organization (WHO), USAID and Stop TB Partnership. They assessed national progress in handling TB, the GOI's 2002-2006 strategic plan, and Indonesia's 2005 Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Director General of Infectious Diseases Dr. Umar Fahmi Achmadi said the National Program of TB Prevention had made good progress, noting that Indonesia managed to treat 250,000 TB patients within the past three years.

According to the latest WHO data, Indonesia ranks third in TB cases after India and China. About 400 people in Indonesia die each day from TB, making it the number

one killer among infectious diseases. Recent Ministry of Health data shows that there were 207,000 cases in 2004, a sharp increase from the 178,000 the previous year. (Note: Indonesia's population was estimated at 214 million in 2003 and 216 million in 2004). Nationwide TB treatment programs include: a) Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS - six-eight-months regular treatment method); b) free medication; c) People Monitoring the Patients (PMP); and d) mass media to disseminate TB information and promote public awareness. GOI officials say PMPs play a huge role in the high cure rate at local health centers (Puskesmas) and in ensuring that medication is taken regularly, preventing high multi-drug resistance cases.

### **Jakarta Is Sinking Fast**

The construction of high-rise buildings and the overexploitation of groundwater have caused Jakarta to sink by as much as 3.3 feet in the past 12 years, according to the Jakarta City Mining Agency. The following chart shows the extent of the problem:

#### **Land Subsidence in Jakarta**

Location	Height above sea level in 1993 (in meter)	Height above sea level in 2005 (in meter)	Land Subsidence (in cm)
North Jakarta	2.03	1.46	57
West Jakarta	2.32	2.11	21
East Jakarta	11.62	11.45	17
South Jakarta	28.76	28.46	30
North Jakarta	3.42	2.40	102

*Source: Jakarta City Mining Agency*

According to Jakarta Mining Agency head Haris Pindratno, new building construction and water usage account for 80 and 17 percent of land subsidence, respectively. Natural subsidence accounts for 3 percent of the problem. Pindratno estimates that about 66,000 gallons of water are sucked from beneath Jakarta every year. Some environmentalists have urged the city administration to construct "as many water reservoirs as possible" to help conserve underground water. Pindratno said annual tax revenue from underground water could reach 52 billion rupiah (about 5.5 million USD) this year. However, in 2004, the city allocated a mere 250 million rupiah (USD 280,000) for the construction of reservoirs. (Note: The Jakarta city government charges customers for use of underground water, with the exception of the parties who use the water for drinking water/household, government offices, state-owned companies, farming/irrigation, fire fighting, and aqua culture farming.)

### **Rare Sumatran Flower Endangered**

On March 22, Indonesian botanist Yuzammi announced to the local media that the gigantic and pungent Titan Arum or Corpse Flower (*Amorphophallus titanium*), which can grow up to 11 feet tall, is slowly disappearing from its native Sumatra rain forests. (Note: Yuzammi conducts research at the Bogor Botanical Gardens located in

West Java). Ironically, the species is flourishing in other countries, with about 600 botanical gardens and arboreta worldwide involved in its cultivation. The Titan Arum was first discovered in 1878 by Italian botanist Odoardo Beccari, and is in fact larger than the more notorious *Rafflesia arnoldii*, which scientifically is deemed the largest flower in the world. Yuzammi warned that the conversion of Sumatra's forests into residential areas is threatening the survival of the endangered plant.

### **HIV/AIDS in Papua**

Papua's Head of Directly Transmitted Disease Eradication, Dr. Suwardi Redjo, revealed that as of December 2004 the number of HIV/AIDS cases had reached 592 in Timika and 657 in Merauke. That compares to 351 cases in Timika and 125 cases in Merauke in 2003 and 114 cases in Timika and 392 cases in Merauke in 2002. Redjo said the liberal sex habits of both local Papuans and migrants are the main reason for the increase in HIV/AIDS patients in Papua. Minister of Fisheries and Marine Affairs Freddy Numberi echoed this view, noting in a local television interview last week that contract marriages and sex liaisons with visiting sailors play a major role in the spread of HIV/AIDS in Papua.

### **Indonesia's Waste Management**

Indonesia produces about 21,000 tons of household waste daily, according to the 2003 Status of Indonesia Environment report, released last year. The GOI admits that it has been unable to solve the waste management crisis the country faces. In a one-day seminar organized by the State Ministry of Environment and the World Bank on March 22, the Bank noted that it has given financial and technical support to 21 waste management companies in Indonesia since 2001. In 2003, the Bank gave USD 10 million in subsidies to eligible compost producers (the first tranche was released in December 2003), with the aim of reducing Indonesia's total urban waste by 60,000 tons within three years. The first phase of the program (the Western Java Environmental Management Project) covers West Java, Jakarta, and Banten provinces. From April 2004 to January 2005, the participating waste management firms processed 450 tons of waste a day and produced a total of 20,000 tons of fertilizer. However, so far only 1.6 percent of Indonesia's garbage is processed into compost.